

SCMP.COM – Selong Selo

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The image is a screenshot of a web page from SCMP.COM. At the top left, there is a logo for 'Post Magazine' with a small flag icon. To the right, there is a 'SIGN IN/UP' button and a menu icon. Below the header is a banner for 'DELVE STORIES' with the tagline 'into their' and an illustration of people. The main content area features the category 'Travel' and the article title 'Top eight Asian beaches'. A sub-headline reads: 'Whether it's sand, sea and serene isolation or bustling stretches of city-slicking white-powdered fun in the sun, there is a beach to suit your mood'. The author is identified as 'Tim Pike' with a profile picture, and the publication date is 'Published: 4:03pm, 9 Nov, 2016'. On the left side, there is a 'TOP PICKS' section with four article teasers, each with a small image and text. The main article image is a wide, sandy beach with a forested hill in the background under a blue sky with light clouds. To the left of the main image are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Email, and Print, along with a comment icon.

Top eight Asian beaches

Published November 9th, 2016

By : Tim Pile



Selong Belanak, Lombok, Indonesia.

One of advantages of living in Hong Kong is how easily we can hop on a plane and soon be relaxing on a palm-fringed screensaver of a beach. A few hours after leaving Chek Lap Kok we're reacquainted with deep-blue skies, fluffy white clouds and air so clean it makes us dizzy. Here, then, in no particular order, are eight Asian beaches that are worth discovering. To provide consistency, I'm sticking to places I've

actually visited. As a result, there's no room for Cambodia's finest, the islands of Okinawa or the west coast of Taiwan. So many beaches, so little time ...

1. Selong Belanak, Lombok, Indonesia

While Bali lures the hordes, adventurous travellers take the ferry across to neighbouring Lombok and head straight to the south of the island. Transport connections require ingenuity but persevere because, as everyone knows, all the best places are hard to reach. Selong Belanak is a welcome antidote to the unchecked development, overcrowding and waste management concerns that blight more established Asian tourist resorts. The broad bay ticks all the boxes: luminous turquoise seas, sand as white as washing powder and more bovine beach action than on Lantau Island. Think Phuket 30 years ago.



Gan, the Maldives.

2. Gan, Maldives

The Maldives are consistently ranked among the world's most dreamy destinations and although it's hard to know where to begin, a pristine patch of sand on the time warp territory of Gan gets my vote. There may be lovelier locations in the archipelago but there's more to Gan than swimming and sunbathing. The island is a former British military base and the beach is situated between the parade ground, rows of low-rise garrison buildings, a mildewing art deco cinema and what's left of the jetty. The British pulled out in 1976 – I bet they were sorry to leave.

[Maldives on a budget: former British military base of Gan](#)



Mirissa, Sri Lanka.

3. Mirissa, Sri Lanka

The Land of Serendipity is home to any number of enticing beaches. Narigama is a broad expanse of fine sand a couple of kilometres from ever-popular and ever-hectic Hikkaduwa. Surfers take advantage of glassy swells, turtles venture ashore when no one's looking and each evening fishermen haul in the catch, helped by sunbathers feeling guilty after yet another day of idleness. Further down the coast is drowsy Mirissa, where beach bums slouch in hammocks sipping smoothies and occasionally venture into the foaming surf to cool off. Take a tuk tuk to the nearby Unesco heritage city of Galle for a spot of retail therapy but get back in time to join a sunset game of beach cricket. Then as the last traces of tangerine and scarlet disappear from the sky, order a sinus-clearing Sri Lankan curry and a bottle or two of Lion Beer.

[Motorbike heaven: Sri Lanka's laid – back and friendly southern coast](#)



El Nido, Palawan, the Philippines.

4. El Nido, Palawan, Philippines

Unless you have endless time on your hands, you won't want to mess about with overnight ferries and long-distance jeepneys to reach Palawan. Instead, save yourself a lot of hassle by flying directly from Manila to isolated but inspiring El Nido. Dramatic vegetation-cloaked limestone scenery, over-water bungalows, snorkelling trips to sun-drenched sandbars and highly rated wreck diving await. El Nido came 10th in TripAdvisor's Best Beaches in the World list for 2016 and although some new construction is inevitable, the mountainous landscape is likely to frustrate developers more efficiently than any local planning laws.

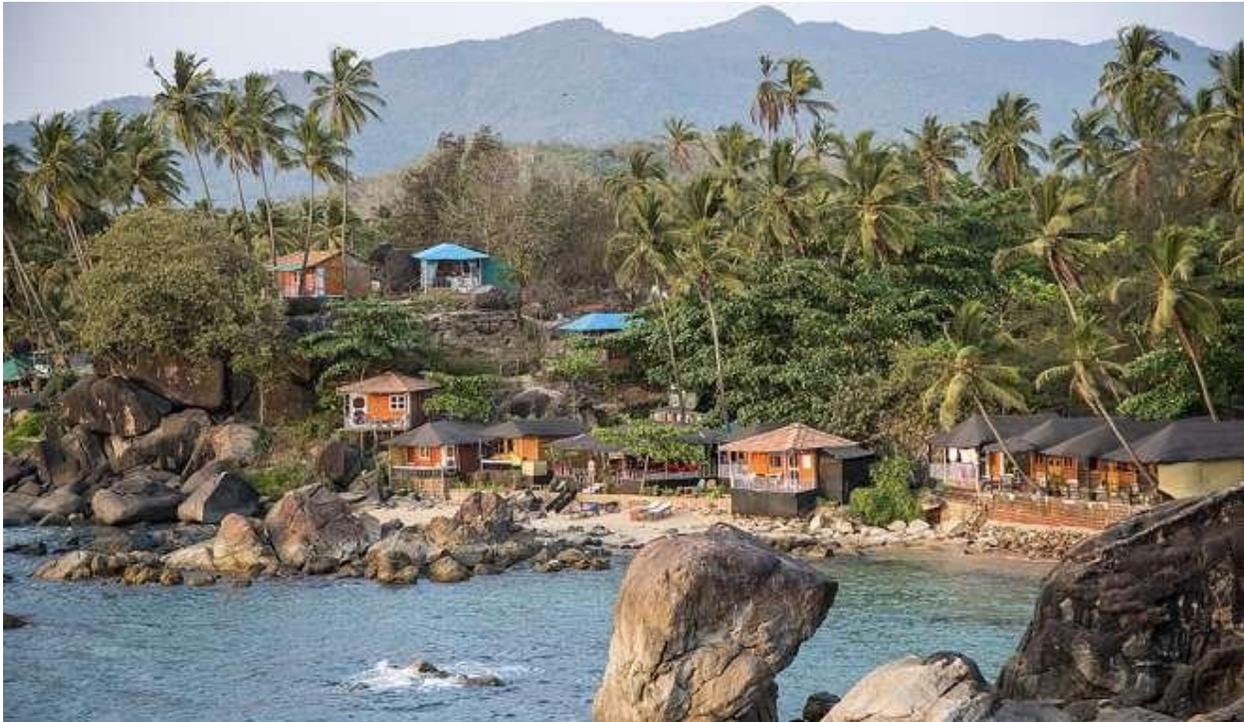
[Sea kayaking in pristine Palawan, the Philippines](#)



Bamboo Bay, Koh Lanta, Thailand.

5. Bamboo Bay, Koh Lanta, Thailand

The practice of charging people to visit the gorgeous beaches of Koh Samet on the grounds that the island is a national park makes sense. However, the other half of the deal should be that authorities make an effort to clear the piles of rubbish hidden behind holiday huts and anywhere else tourists aren't supposed to notice. Despite playing perennial bridesmaid to Phi Phi, rugged Koh Lanta has long seduced its share of suitors. The stretch of sand at Bamboo Bay, in the far south of the island, may not be as talcum-powder soft, and the sea is a shade less turquoise than its beautiful neighbour, but a laid-back beach scene and reasonable prices do much to compensate. Koh Lanta doesn't have an airport so fly into Phuket and hop on a ferry.



Palolem, in Goa, India. Picture: Tim Pile

6. Goa, India

When discussing India's beaches it's hard to overlook Goa. For sheer variety, the former Portuguese colony is hard to beat. Head as far north (Querim) or south (Agonda, Palolem) of Goa Airport as possible for the best beaches. "In the know" cows grab all the best spots but there's enough space for everyone. As dusk approaches and the lights from fishing vessels fleck the Arabian Sea, hungry travellers sit down to freshly caught snapper baked in tandoor ovens. Goa exerts a strange hold on visitors, many of whom find themselves staying longer than planned. I blame the coconut toddy.

[Beach hopping in Goa, India's colourful smallest state \(just mind the coconuts\)](#)



Nha Trang, Vietnam.

7. Nha Trang, Vietnam

Choosing a single beach in a country with more than 3,400km of coastline is no easy task but the creamy sweep of sand at Nha Trang is right up there. Sun worshippers have 6km to choose from and, this being the only city beach on this list, there are plenty of interesting diversions for fidgety types. Paragliders are drawn by smooth thermals and jaw-dropping emerald vistas, and boat trips to offshore islands are popular. Hon Mun, which is part of a marine protected area, is a good place to start. Pack a snorkel, mask and an underwater camera.



Pulau Kapas, Malaysia.

8. Pulau Kapas, Malaysia

The Perhentian Islands, off northeast Malaysia, boast a number of world-class beaches and are distant enough from large centres of population that they remain more mellow than manic. Further down the coast and sleepier still is Pulau Kapas, a blink-and-you-miss-it speck of an island where the drone of jet skis and

the thump of music from bars is notably absent. “*Kapas*” means cotton in Malay and refers to the silky white sands occupied by a handful of holidaymakers who must wonder where all the other tourists are. Never has the rest of the world and all its problems felt so far away – but that’s partly because the Wi-fi is rubbish.

*This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as: Asian beaches

Link : <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/travel/article/2044307/top-eight-asian-beaches>